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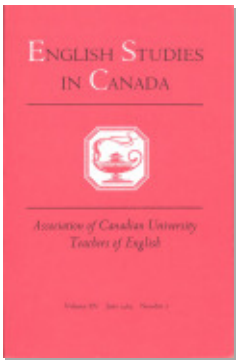

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THE *PEARL*-POET AS MASTER OF LOGIC

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It was during the time that he was writing *Ulysses*, I believe, that someone asked James Joyce whether there weren't already enough words in the English language for him, and he replied that there were, but they weren't the right ones. Some years later, during the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, someone else said, "But Mr. Joyce, some of your puns are trivial," and he answered, "Yes, and some of them are quadrivial."

The sentiments underlying these two responses may be identical, but the form and manner of the first show Joyce the modern man, while the second reveals his medieval side. In the first case, Joyce is speaking *about* his linguistic practice and transferring information to any listener who understands English; in the second, he is exemplifying that practice through words that already exist,[1] and his full meaning is available only to those who share some special pieces of information with him. The ideal auditor must be able to move beyond the equation of "trivial" with "inconsequential" and to recognize that "tri-" means "three" and "quadri-" means "four" in order to understand Joyce saying that words in the *Wake* may be amalgamations of four other words or, by implication, five, and "Welcome the sixte, whan that evere he shal." Such linguistic background alone is not sufficient. Those who know something about medieval universities, and who know that Joyce had a good Jesuit education, will also be able to see his reference to the curricular division between the *trivium* of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric and the *quadrivium* of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music: Joyce's puns are not random sound-play, but structured comments on his culture's history.

Since we are readers who have these abilities, this much of the interpretation is simple, but further analysis encounters unresolvable uncertainties. If we wanted to argue that either the three/four or the *trivium/quadrivium* dichotomy is primary and the other is secondary, we would need more evidence, which is unattainable: on which syllable (if any) did Joyce put extra stress as he pronounced the word "quadrivial"? Furthermore, while we may be sure that Joyce would recognize *trivia* as an epithet for the triple goddess who assumes the form of virgin, bride and crone, are we justified in treating *this*

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sentence as a guide to an expanded interpretation of Anna Livia Plurabelle? Well, Joyce himself might possibly allow it, without admitting or denying that it was part of his conscious intention, but what would he think of a Jungian analysis based on *this sentence* (he did, after all, use the words "Jung and easily freudened") of his views on the Trinity and the Quaternity?

We will never have as much information about the educational background of any medieval author as we have about Joyce's, nor will we ever share as fully in medieval "common knowledge" as we do in its modern equivalent, nor will we ever hear the inflection or tone of any medieval voice. In order even to develop hypotheses concerning medieval word-play (or, indeed, to suspect that words are playing) we must rely either on contextual clues from elsewhere in the work itself or on the practice of other writers in the same cultural milieu. As always, it is the slowly evolving scholarly consensus which will decide whether the double meanings are really "there" or just being "read into" the text. The history of scholarly notes and glosses to Chaucer's use of the word "queynte," for example, would be an interesting test case; at the moment, few critics would say that he is never punning or that he is always punning, and none would assume that the word is a pun in any other medieval work solely because it sometimes is in Chaucer.[2]

If we choose to rely only on the immediate context of a suspected case of word-play and restrict ourselves to the verbal level, using such aids as frequency counts, we will be limited to those instances where the poet is being most blatant; when he is subtler and more proficient, we will be less certain. Some help may come from other levels of the text, where subsequent plot developments validate a secondary meaning for a suspicious word,[3] but if the author is creating a subtext which subverts or challenges common-sense responses to surface meaning, such evidence will always be insufficient. At the other end of the spectrum, a construct such as "the general cultural milieu" runs the risk of becoming a hypostatized "medieval mind" and can easily turn into assertions that all medieval people thought alike or result in critical generalizations so general as to be useless for the study of particular passages in particular texts.

To avoid these pitfalls, in this analysis I will work within well-defined self-imposed limitations. All of the examples of poetic word-play are taken from one text and all are centred on words which are given special prominence. The subtextual argument they reveal is consistent with views expressed more overtly elsewhere in the poem. The interpretive strategy derived from works other than the poem itself is grounded in the statements and ideas of those medieval authors who more than any others strove to be explicit, unambiguous, and universally comprehensible.

Students of medieval literature are fortunate in that medieval universities regarded word-play as a trivial matter. It is discussed in dozens of surviving

logical tracts,[4] some devoted entirely to *fallacie* and others with long sections called *De Sophistica Argumentatione*. Some of these works are highly specialized and would now require both talent and dedication for full comprehension, but many of them are teaching manuals intended for use by teenaged boys, and so they contain hundreds of crystal-clear examples to help fix the categories of improper verbal behaviour in young minds. Furthermore, although there are significant variations and developments in the more refined portions of the analysis, and an occasional innovation in the *exempla*, both the general ideas about verbal complexity and the ways of embodying them in memorable problems remained relatively constant from the late twelfth century to the late fifteenth, and, in some circles, even beyond that. While I would not claim, therefore, that the *Pearl*-poet read any of the works I quote here, the ideas they contain were known to anyone with the rudiments of a university education, and the examples used here were clichés as well-known (and as recognizable even in abbreviated form) as "I think therefore I am," "Have you stopped beating your wife?" and "If a tree falls in the forest . . ." are to sophomores and ex-sophomores today.

For modern readers, the simplest concept used in these tracts is *equivocatio*. Where we would speak of two identically spelled homonyms, or write dictionaries and glossaries with little a's and b's and superscripted numbers, medieval logicians spoke of the "multiplicitas simplicis sermonis ex diversis institutionibus diversa significantis" (loosely, one word which has been assigned different meanings).[5] The most common example is the word *canis*, which means "seal" and "the constellation Dog" as well as "dog." When this word is discussed in connection with the *fallacia equivocationis*, the usual procedure is to put it into a syllogism which appears to be formally valid:

> canis est animal
> et celeste sidus est canis
> ergo celeste sidus est animal
> [a dog is an animal
> and a constellation is a dog
> therefore a constellation is an animal][6]

The next step involves cases where the secondary meaning is part of what we would call a figure of speech: "bibo ciphum" (I drink a goblet) and "bibo Bachum" (I drink Bacchus)[7] mean of course that I drink the wine discovered by Bacchus and contained in the goblet. Similar treatment is accorded to "laughing" meadows, "running" rivers, and "flying" arrows.

The clearest example of this phenomenon in *Pearl* is presented so explicitly (and resolved, by the Pearl-maiden, so pedantically) that it hardly seems to be a logical problem at all. When the narrator learns that Pearl now dwells in Jerusalem, his response is based on the following syllogism:

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Jerusalem is a city in Judea
Pearl lives in Jerusalem
Therefore Pearl lives in a city in Judea.

Straightening out his confusion is simply a matter of pointing out that "Jerusalem" is an equivocal word. In the first premiss it refers to the "olde Jerusalem" (line 941), and in the second premiss it refers to the "nwe" (line 943).

The analysis of this passage, from the strictly logical point of view, would need to go no further, but there are strong indications that the poet has a deeper interest in the nature of the differences between these two "Jerusalems." This discussion about the two meanings is not found in the group of stanzas where "Jerusalem" is the pivot-word, but is delayed until two sections later, where the pivot-word is "mote." Modern glossaries and dictionaries include several different "words" spelled "mote," and modern philologists recognize differences of pronunciation between (and have computers which can print) short *o*, long *o*, and long *o* with a dot under it. When these various forms were pronounced, medieval listeners were undoubtedly able to make these distinctions too. Nevertheless, medieval logicians did not ignore similarly spelled near-homonyms, but rather treated them under the heading of *fallacia accentus*, and went far beyond what would seem to be required by problems that might arise in ordinary language. It is simple enough for anyone who knows a little about Latin vowel length to create a syllogism showing that an apple (*malum* with a long *a*) is evil (*malum* with a short *a*),[8] but one must go looking in order to find a way to use the similarly spelled infinitives of *pendo* (to esteem) and *pendeo* (to hang)[9] to "prove" that just men ought to be hanged,[10] or to create a syllogism such as

tu comedis pullos et anseres
ergo tu comedis pullos et es anser
[you eat chickens and geese
therefore you eat chickens and you are a goose]

which appears to work because of the similarity between "anseres" and "anser es." It is, in fact, a fallacy of the first species of the *fallacia accentus*,[11] or, according to a different classification system, of the third subdivision of the first principal mode of that fallacy.[12]

Tastes in verbal analysis change, and what is the cutting edge of linguistic philosophy for one millennium[13] is frigid logic-chopping in the next. Remote as the content of these examples may seem from the sublime concerns of *Pearl*, however, this *is* the way the poet's contemporaries looked at verbal complexity; what is more, in addition to the well-known medieval fascination with classificatory systems, it reveals an abiding delight in verbal play itself, as

generations of logic students and masters brought together words and meanings kept separate in ordinary speech, in order to create problems for their analytic tools to resolve. A modern critic who sees only the separation, or who uses lexicographical techniques (which are, after all, the historical product of the classification phase) to ascribe only one meaning to a complex word in a poem, is surely missing the point.

To return, then, to "mote": Gordon's glossary says that in lines 726, 764, 843, 924, 948, 960, and 972 it means "spot, stain," in lines 142, 936, 937, 948, 949, and 973 it means "walled city,"[14] and in line 855 it means "dispute." These are, for Gordon, separate words, and so there is no confusion and no mention of them in the notes. When the examples come from widely separated parts of the poem, we could agree: the context of line 142 probably ensures that readers would think of "city" and only "city." But when they are clustered in one segment of the poem, from line 924 to line 973, when the glossary is forced to put "948" after two different entries, when all the examples of "mote" as "stain" follow the word "wythouten" and there are two examples of "motelez" (925 and 961) in the same segment, then the desire to separate and define should be resisted.

"Jerusalem" means "ceté of God" and "syȝt of pes" (952). Both meanings are appropriate to the old Jerusalem, but only within certain strict limitations. It was sanctified by the presence of the Word made flesh, but it was stained by the sins of its inhabitants. It was also the "syȝt of pes" in that our peace was created there, but only at one moment ("at ene," 953). The new Jerusalem is a "motelez mote." It is free from all "mote" as "stain." It is free from "mote" as "dispute," and so is the "syȝt of pes" not only at one point in time, but "wythouten reles" (956). It is also a city that is not a city: to think of heaven as a *place*, which can be located, measured, and divided, is sheer folly, as any reader of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* knows. It is also a sure indication of a fallen will: the first sign of Satan's rebelliousness was his belief that heaven had a northern region.[15] The poet's logic teachers might rap his knuckles for committing fallacies of equivocation and accent, but the product of his game is a theologically impeccable assertion of heaven's sinlessness, timelessness, and spacelessness, and, incidentally, shows that when they are properly managed, there are enough words already in the English language and they are the right ones.

As with heaven, so too with its "inhabitants." In the opening section of the poem, the narrator says that he has lost Pearl in a garden (9), that the earth is spoiling a pleasant jewel (23), and that in her grave "ryche3 to rot is runne" (26). In the "motelez mote" section, the Pearl-maiden expresses the matter correctly: our *flesh* is "layd to rote" (958). The distinction between the body and the soul and their respective fates after death is of course a matter for theological investigation in the light of divine revelation, but that does not

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mean it is beyond logic or free from the possibilities of discussion in the context of fallacy theory,[16] especially when the concern becomes personal. Proper names are equivocal terms, not only because different people can have the same name, but also because one person's name can be used in quite different ways. "I am reading Chaucer," for example, has a different referent from "Chaucer lived in London."[17] The *Dialectica Monacensis* distinguishes between five different "Peters": "Petrus est vox dissillaba, Petrus est proprium nomen, Petrus est homo, Petrus iacet in tumulo, Petrus est in celo" (Peter is a two-syllable word, Peter is a proper name, Peter is a man, Peter lies in the grave, Peter is in heaven).[18] The narrator of *Pearl*, whatever other problems he may have as the poem opens, is unable to distinguish between Pearl "in tumulo" and Pearl "in celo." He is where he lost her, but she is not there.

She is not where he is, and when he finds out "where" she is, he cannot go there (315ff.), for he is a living human being subject to the constraints of time and space. In the opening stanzas of the poem, he is "in þat erber grene" (38), "In Augoste in a hyȝ sesoun" (39), "On huyle þer perle hit trendled down" (41), and at the end he is still "in þat erber wlonk" (1171) and "vpon þat hylle . . . / Þer as my perle to grounde strayd" (1172-73). Even his vision, at the beginning, is described as travel within created dimensions: "Fro spot my spyryt þer sprang in space" (61). Gordon's note would restrict the meaning of "in space" to OED 1 (c), "after a time or while,"[19] but there are sufficient fourteenth-century examples of OED 5, "linear distance," and OED 6, "superficial extent or area," to argue that the poet means "sprang after a while," "sprang in (i.e., within) time," and "sprang in space." The narrator does not know where he has travelled to, but he thinks of it as "in þis worlde" (65).[20] His own language, however, when properly understood, is sufficient to reveal his error. The first segment of the poem is built on the opposition between his location ("þat spot," 13, 25, 37, 49) and Pearl, who is "wythouten spot" (12, 24, 36, 48, 60): the parallel between "spot/wythouten spot" and "mote/wythouten mote" should be enough to suggest that "free from spatial constraints" is as important a meaning here as "stainless," whether "stainless" is understood in physical or moral terms.

The aspatiality of a soul in bliss is, of course, only one of the aspects of Pearl's new life which the narrator finds hard to understand. He believes that she exists only because he has seen her with his eyes, and is rebuked for his pride and lack of trust in Christ's promises of eternal life (301-12). He has difficulty in believing that Pearl is a queen, for in his world such a title is allotted to only one woman per realm, and he knows that Mary is the Queen of Heaven. Doctrinal problems such as these can be sorted out by straightforward exposition or homily, but there is one point in the discussion of this matter where the Pearl-maiden speaks again in the tones of a logic master:

'Maskelles,' quod þat myry quene,
'Vnblemyst I am, wythouten blot,
And þat may I wyth mensk menteene;
Bot "makeleȝ quene" þenne sade I not.' (781-84)

The words "maskelles" and "makeleȝ" have been much discussed and sometimes emended to impose consistency,[21] but the differences between them do not really matter. The Pearl-maiden and one hundred and forty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine others (more or less) are both "maskelles" (without spot, blot, or stain) and "makeleȝ" (peerless and husbandless — this latter meaning, revealed by the collocation of "vergynté" [767], "maskelleȝ bryd" [769], and "makeleȝ may" [780], is ignored by Gordon).[22] If we must gloss, then, we need an entry such as "ma(s)kel(l)eȝ: "spotless sinless virgin bride of Christ" to indicate the poet's quadrivial talent.

Furthermore, all of these maidens are also queens. What, therefore, is wrong with the syllogism

Pearl is ma(s)kel(l)eȝ
Pearl is a queen
Therefore Pearl is a ma(s)kel(l)eȝ queen

which would cause Pearl to reject the conclusion? We have a choice of fallacies here. It may be treated as a *fallacia secundum quid et simpliciter*: there is a difference between predicating something of something else "in a certain respect" and predicating it "simply." We cannot deduce from "An Ethiopian is white with respect to his teeth" that "An Ethiopian is white," or from "Wine is not good for a sick man" that "Wine is not good," or that a "dead man" is a "man"; because *currit* may refer to the *potentia currendi* as well as to the act of running, we must be careful in concluding from "equus iste bene currit" that "equus iste currit."[23] We could therefore say that Pearl is "ma(s)kel(l)eȝ" *simpliciter*, but "ma(s)kel(l)eȝ quene" would mean "without equal in her royal status" and so would be false. Or, more elegantly, we could follow the theological Magister Willelmus:

Fallatia etiam secundum accidens est cum ab assignatis
divisim infertur coniunctim. Ut:
'Michael est spiritus
Michael est sanctus
ergo Michael est Spiritus Sanctus.'

[It is also a fallacy according to accident when a conjunctive attribution is deduced from disjunctive attributions. For example,

"Michael (the archangel) is a spirit
Michael is holy
Therefore Michael is the Holy Spirit."][24]

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These examples, and their analysis according to the methods of medieval logic, all tend to lead us away from the concern with the narrator's personal situation, his grief over his lost Pearl, and even from any interest in the fact that she was "me nerre þen aunte or nece" (233). This, I think, is all to the good: the narrator may vacillate between the worldly and spiritual perspectives implied respectively by the phrases "My priuy perle" (24) and "þat precios perle" (60), but the poet expects more from his audience. It is more important for the author to educate his audience than for the narrator to believe that Pearl still exists; for the audience it does not matter whether the Pearl-maiden "is" the narrator's daughter or merely a character in a divinely authored visionary husk whose kernel is doctrinally sound. This need for a transformation of perspective is again signalled by an English equivalent of one of the Latin schoolboy games.

By a simple piece of grammatical chicanery, it was possible for masters to "prove" that bishops are asses, and, I am sure, for students to prove that masters are asses: "In terra tua alicuius episcopi sunt multi asini. Ergo in terra tua episcopi sunt multi asini. Ergo in terra tua episcopi sunt asini."[25] As we remove the modifying adjectives, *episcopi* stops being an obvious genitive singular ("a bishop's asses") and starts to look like a nominative plural ("bishops are asses").[26]

In *Pearl*, "prynces paye" is given comparable treatment. When we first meet the word "prynces" in line 1, we read it as a genitive plural,[27] but when we meet it in the final section of the poem, linked with "paye" as a pivot-word, it is singular. In the first section, the princes are the quintessence of human creatures, pleased by earthly value; in the last section the prince is Christ, by *suppositio antonomatica*, which occurs "quando terminus communis supponit pro eo cui maxime convenit nomen, ut 'Apostolus dicit hoc,' intelligitur Paulus; similiter: 'Philosophus dicit hoc,' intelligitur Aristotiles" (when a common term stands for that [person or thing] for which the noun is most appropriate, as "The apostle says this," means Paul, and similarly, "The philosopher says this," means Aristotle).[28] The poet's project is to inspire his audience to shift from that which pleases princes to that which pleases the Prince, and around this kernel he has fashioned his *Pearl*.

I would expect that any literary student of *Pearl* who reads this article will think that I have scraped the bottom of the barrel, but anyone who has examined the logical texts first hand (or who has deduced from my footnotes that de Rijk's Volume two, Part two is almost 800 pages long) will know that I have barely scratched the surface. All my examples of double-meanings depend on equivocal words which are the same part of speech, while the tracts give examples of different parts of speech with the same spelling, and extend the range of the study into syntax.[29] Once this boundary is crossed, the number of possibilities for analysis increases dramatically. Only a few of the

subdivisions of fallacy theory have been used here, and there is no mention of *loci* (*topica*, commonplaces), which could serve as a basis for the examination of any medieval poet's argument, whether he followed the rules or played with them. All the texts used here are early; by the fourteenth century, logicians were dealing with much more complex topics, including self-referential propositions such as the "Cretan-liar" paradox.[30] If we believe that the *Pearl*-poet kept abreast of current academic thought, we should be reading Ockham, Buridan, Bradwardine, Holcott, Heytesbury — and not just their theological works.

Still, for every one of my readers who goes to the library to find de Rijk (BC 34 R57), there will be hundreds who will stick to their texts of *Pearl*. Yet if the poet took as much pleasure as I think he did in bringing together senses that others kept separate, they will say "Perhaps it is both" when an editor says "It is this and not that," whether he is referring to a word or to an idea behind the words.[31] The *Pearl*-poet is a master of logic, not its servant, and that means he is in control not only of the techniques which reduce pointless confusion but also of the ways in which ambiguous words and verbal structures can convey complex Christian truth. "Everybody knows" that word-games are silly, but, as Joyce pointed out, Christ built His Church upon a pun.

NOTES

[1] Despite all appearances to the contrary, "quadrivial" is not a Joycean coinage: the earliest OED citation is dated 1420.

[2] On a less scholarly level, the extremes of a strong, open reading and a rigid, closed reading are well represented by two of my former students. One tried to include all Chaucer's uses of the word "wood" in a study of vegetation imagery, and the other tried to find the word "piss" in the glossary to learn what it meant in "medieval times."

[3] Even here, however, problems arise with the passage of time. Joyce's story *The Boarding House* contains the line "He had a good screw." The argument that this is Dublin slang for "He had a decent salary" is not helped by the fact that the young man in question is being intimidated into "making an honest woman" of the landlady's daughter. And yet thei spake hem so, and spedde as wel in love as men now do.

[4] For ease of reference, I have chosen most of my examples from L. M. de Rijk, *Logica Modernorum: A Contribution to the History of Early Terminist Logic*, Vol. 2, *The Origin and Early Development of the Theory of Supposition*, Part 2, *Texts and Indices* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1967), but for the elementary material used here it would have been quite possible to use other manuals, such as those by Peter of Spain, Lambert of Auxerre, or William of Sherwood. Similarly, although I make reference only to *Pearl*, ed. E. V. Gordon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), few of the differences in later editions, notes, and glossaries would affect my argument.

[5] *Tractatus Anagnini*, de Rijk, p. 327; for a more complete (and more verbose) definition, see *Dialectica Monacensis*, de Rijk, p. 559.

[6] *Excerpta Norimbergensia*, de Rijk, p. 121. More frequently, one finds syllogisms about "barking" and "seals," but these do not work in translation, since seals *do* bark in English — or, rather, seals, in English, *do* "bark."

[7] *Dialectica Monacensis*, p. 561.

[8] *Dialectica Monacensis*, p. 576.

[9] *Fallacie Londinenses*, de Rijk, p. 664.

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[10] Or, rather, that men who are just ought to be hanged.

[11] *Dialectica Monacensis*, p. 575.

[12] *Fallacie Londinenses*, p. 664, where the example involves "in conviviolo quere" and "in convivio loquere."

[13] Or more. The source of much of the thinking behind these studies is, of course, Aristotle's *Sophistici Elenchi.*

[14] "Walled" is a limitation not found in the *Middle English Dictionary.*

[15] Our poet also stresses the moral aspect of a limited, spatial world-view in *Patience*, where Jonah is repeatedly contained (in the hold of the ship, the belly of the whale, and his bower) even as he tries to be the master of space by going west when God sends him east and by wishing that his comfortable little booth were back in his homeland.

[16] Indeed, one of the treatises, the *Fallacie Magistri Willelmi*, written for the use of young theologians, contains examples almost exclusively on moral and theological topics. The author (probably William de Monte; see de Rijk, p. 36) asks his pupils to consider "omnis caritas est qualitas mentis; Deus caritas est; ergo Deus est qualitas mentis" (683); "nichil vult Filius quod non vult Pater esse; sed Filius vult esse homo; ergo Pater vult esse homo" (685); "Deus est Pater; Deus est Filius; ergo Pater est Filius" (692); and "Deus est generans; Deus est genitus; ergo idem est generans et genitus" (691). One might well be justified in thinking that salvation depends on the mastery of fallacy theory.

[17] Augustine, in *De Dialectica*, ed. Jan Pinborg and trans. B. Darrell Jackson (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1975), p. 115, gives "'Tullius freed the fatherland from ruin' and 'Tullius stands gilded on the Capitol' and 'You must read all of Tullius' and 'Tullius is buried in this place.'"

[18] De Rijk, p. 561.

[19] Gordon, p. 49.

[20] Gordon's note, p. 49, would restrict the possibilities of ambiguity in one line by pointing to another line where only one of the possible meanings is activated: "'I had no idea at all where it was' is probably the meaning, rather than 'I had no idea where in this world it was.' Cf. 293." Line 293, however, says "in worlde," not "in þis worlde."

[21] Gollancz and Osgood would emend forms of "makeleȝ" to "maskelles" in 733 and 757, but Gordon retains the manuscript reading on the ground that "the poet may well have deliberately utilized the similarity in sound of the two epithets to make play on two aspects of the pearl-symbolism" (p. 71, note to 733).

[22] The first citation for *MED* (b), "without a mate," is merely the first *unequivocal* example, a raven in *The Seven Sages of Rome* who "drof hys make away" and so shall be "makeless." This is surprising, given the number of citations under (a), "unequalled, unparalleled, unique . . . ," of "makelese meiden," "Maiden, moder makeles," and the like, and the obvious "My makeleȝ Lambe . . . Me ches to hys make" in *Pearl* itself (757-59).

[23] *Dialectica Monacensis*, pp. 592-95.

[24] *Fallacie Magistri Willelmi*, p. 692. This is only one of many cases where the logicians would have benefited greatly (as they knew; see de Rijk, p. 125) from languages with definite and indefinite articles.

[25] *Quaestiones Victorinae*, de Rijk, p. 748. The *Dialectica Monacensis* proves, conversely, that asses are bishops (p. 562), and the *Tractatus Anagnini*, still more tamely, that books are masters (pp. 255 and 292).

[26] Similar procedures are used in connection with words of common gender and with the coincidence of the feminine singular with the neuter plural: "omnis virgo caste vivens est virgo casta; Iohannes est virgo caste vivens; ergo est virgo casta" and "omnia casta sunt plura; Mater Christi est casta; ergo est plura" are the examples in the *Fallacie Magistri Willelmi* (p. 690).

[27] Gordon, who reads it as a genitive singular, does so only because it is a singular in the poem's final stanzas (p. 45), and so flattens the dynamic effect.

[28] *Logica "Cum sit nostra"*, de Rijk, p. 447.

[29] "Nullus comedit carnes nisi in die Veneris; ergo qui comedit carnes, comedit eas in die Veneris" seems to mean "No one eats meat except on Friday; therefore whoever eats meat eats it on Friday" (*Dialectica Monacensis*, p. 565). The reasoning is sophistic, however, for "nisi" in the first proposition is the genitive case of the word "nisus" (sparrow-hawk), not the conjunction "nisi" (except, unless). Similarly, "verum est quod Deus non est" (ibid.) is true, but only if we are sharp enough to recognize the difference between "quod" as a conjunction and "quod" as a pronoun, and so between "It is true that God does not exist" and "Something which is not God is true."

[30] Recently discussed in connection with Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, at the 22nd Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, by Peter Travis.

[31] "39 The emphasis on the cutting of the corn suggests that the *hyȝ sesoun* is Lammas, as Gollancz understood it to be, rather than the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, as Osgood assumed" (Gordon, p. 47).